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JANUARY 1990

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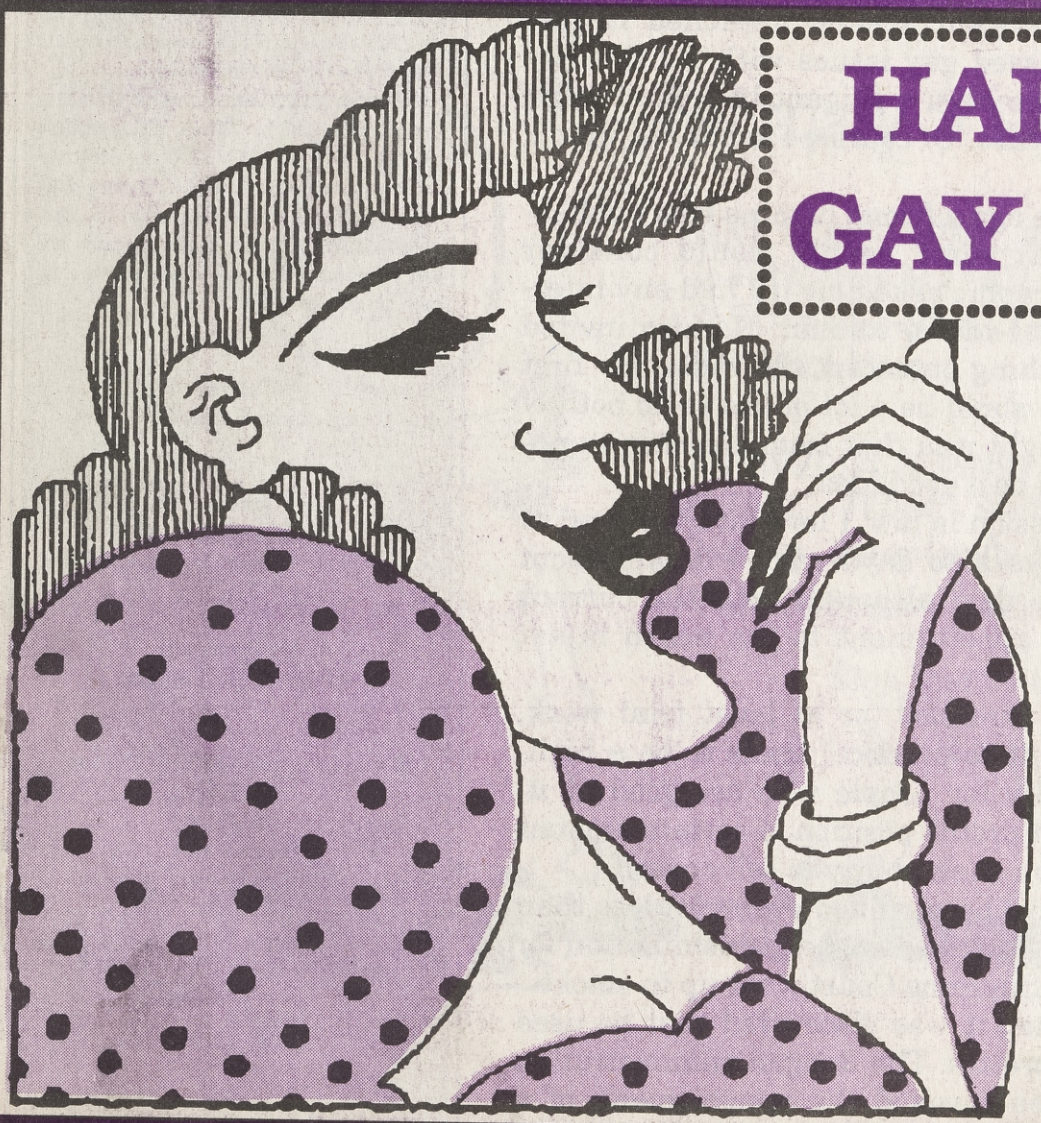

HAPPY GAY 90's

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IN MY OPINION

by Mel Dahl

I'm having an identity crisis: Am I in or out of the closet?

Most of my friends would say that is a silly question. I have written this column for Patlar (under my real name) for over a year. I have written a number of pieces for publication in non-gay magazines and newspapers on gay topics. My friends know I'm gay and don't care. My roommate knows I'm gay and doesn't care. My employer knows I'm gay and doesn't care. My family knows I'm gay and, well, anyway, they know. I have held office in gay organizations, preached in gay churches, and discussed gay issues with Ed Bradley on 60 Minutes. I have been a litigant in federal court in a gay civil-rights case. Of course, I'm out. So what's the problem?

About six months ago a friend of mine who publishes a magazine that some people would consider obscene and pornographic asked me if I had any interest in writing a legal-advice column. He also invited me to pose with nothing on except the radio. My first thought was that it would be a lot of fun to do both of them. My next thought was that from a career standpoint, neither would be a good idea.

My chosen profession is law. I love law. I'm good at it. When I allow myself to daydream, I dream about being a judge some day (although with the current administration, an appointment to the bench is not likely).

The problem is that law (or at least trial work, which is what I want to practice) tends to be a high-profile job, especially for people who are good at it. With any other high-profile position, a certain amount of success depends on one's ability to sell oneself.

Legal careers have been ruined over a lot less than posing in the nude. Douglas Ginsberg's nomination for appointment to the Supreme Court went up in smoke--almost literally--when it was discovered that he used to smoke funny cigarettes. The Reagan administration first appointed, then revoked the appointment, of a judge when it was discovered that he was an atheist. Yes, I know, whether someone should be an attorney or

PATLAR

Voice of Gay America

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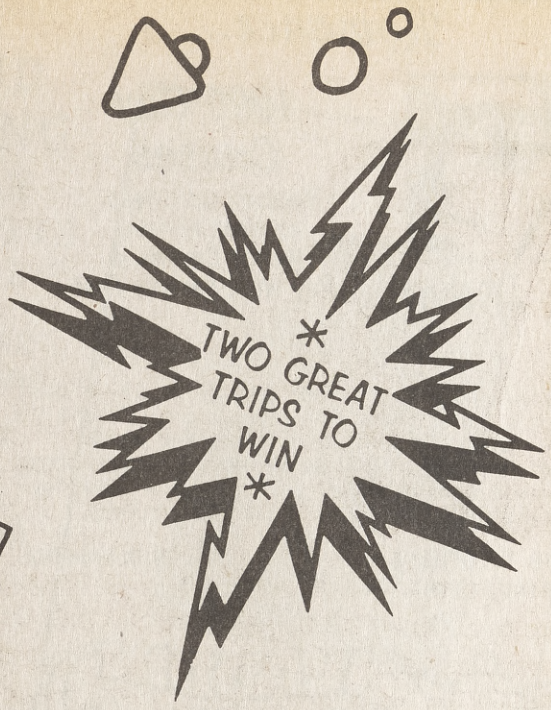

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a judge ought to depend on the quality of his or her legal work and not personal idiosyncrasies, and that people should, within reason, be allowed to be themselves without economic or career penalization. Reality is that that is not the case.

So then, the balancing test is: If one has the opportunity to do some good (for himself or herself and/or society as a whole) at the expense of not allowing full expression of the beautiful diversity that makes each of us unique, which is more important? Expressing diversity, or doing good for self and others?

A gay person who has chosen to remain in the closet and tell nobody about his or her sexual orientation has decided that the personal cost of coming out is just too great. By the same token, those affectionately known as "radical faeries" have decided that they don't care what it costs personally, they are just going to be themselves.

I don't mean to sound like the choice is either black or white. My difficulty stems from the particular profession I have chosen: There are a hundred professions out there where I could pose for a different sex magazine every month and it wouldn't make any difference to my career opportunities. There are certain types of law I could practice (as long as I didn't aspire to being appointed to the bench) where that would also be true. Society is a lot more tolerant than it used to be, and my frank suspicion is that most of the gay world could be openly gay without suffering too much in the way of overt discrimination. However, if you are looking to get elected to public office, you still have to be able to sell yourself to Middle America.

Of course, this is a vicious circle. The more people there are who refuse to conform to repressive mores and customs, the more those mores and customs are undermined. Being gay is much more socially acceptable today than it used to be, in part because certain radical faeries decided they weren't going to wait for society to change. We have a movement because people were willing to go to jail and endure harassment and discrimination. Change comes from those who refuse to submit to the current order.

There is also such a thing as reducing the risk, of deciding to be yourself but making decisions about time, place, and manner. Writing a legal-advice column is probably safer than posing. Coming out to your friends is probably safer than coming out to your employer.

So, beginning next issue, Mel's Legal Advice will be appearing among the erotic pictures and disgusting fiction. About the pictures? We'll see.

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HORNER'S CORNER

by Lee Horner

(First of a series of articles reporting on various "get rich quick" operations going around with editorial comment from an attorney who checks them out.)

Our office recently handled a really sad case for an elderly lady. Seems she had sold the family homestead and had about $100,000--fully insured--safely tucked away in the bank drawing about 8% interest.

She also had made friends with a husband-and-wife team of con artists, although she didn't suspect them to be crooked until much later. These people stated to our clients that they represented an outfit called the European Overseas Bank Ltd. of the Marshall Islands (which are located approximately 13,000 miles northeast of Australia.)

This "bank," it was represented, had about 15 offices internationally in Belgium, Spain, Switerzerland, Canada, Australia, France, etc. and another ten offices or so in the United States, including Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, etc.

The "bank" in its literature promised to pay between 18 and 21 percent on "certificates of deposit" (CDs) that would mature in not more than one year.

As for "insurance," a challenge was issued to the prospective depositor (in poker, such a person is known as a "fish")--go down to your local FDIC insured bank and ask the banker to personally guarantee your deposit. Also ask him to back up the deposit with government "stripped coupon" bonds. If he won't do it, just how safe is your money?

Our bank president guarantees your deposits with her own personal assets (and she signed a surety guarantee so stating). And if you so requested (the "so requested" part being in ultra fine print), the European Overseas Band Ltd. would back your CD with stripped or "zero" coupon U.S. Treasury Bonds.

Let's stop right there. How does this sound to you? The bank president/owner herself personally guaranteeing the deposit, government bonds of some kind backing up the deposit--just how can you go wrong?

And what kind of bonds were those? Government what?

First, consider the bank itself. The literature also said the it was exempt from U.S banking laws by virtue of a special treaty between the United States and the Marshall Islands. Does that arouse any suspicions yet?

They promised to actually hand you the bonds to hold as security, too. Now does it sound phony or legit?

Let's look at these bonds. Call up your favorite stockbroker and see what ten-year-stripped zero coupon bonds can be bought for.

You are buying a "single payment" bond that pays face value at maturity--no interim interest; in fact, no interest period. What you see (face value) is what you get. At the time this scam went down, you could buy ten-year zero-coupon bonds all day long for 26 cents on the dollar. That is, a $1000 bond would be purchasable from any stockbroker in town for $260. You get your $1000 at the maturity date, ten years hence.

Next question. How does the bank expect to make any money if it is paying you say 21%, insured or not?

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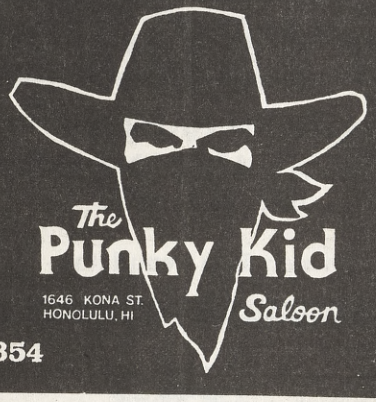

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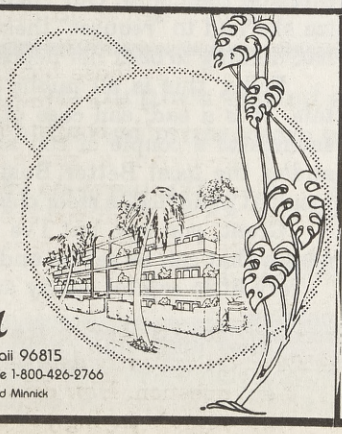

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Good point! And here is the very heart of the problem. They can't! Who in the banking business (or any other business) is going to pay someone 21% for the use of money they can borrow at prime plus 3%, i.e. 12-13%?

Needles to say, when maturity rolled around, our client didn't get her 100 grand. It turns out that the "bank" was nothing more than a mail-drop operation which used answering services worldwide (including all those fancy USA offices) to answer the phone "European Overseas Bank Ltd." and to forward mail to the bank's owner in Whittier at the rented room she resides in.

The CDs were printed at a local instant-printing company as were the phony letterhead and bank-president "guarantees."

Madam Bank President, it turns out, had no assets at the time our client bought her CD--she drove a car ten years old, owned no real estate, and didn't have anything of substance to back up this so-called guarantee. To make matters worse, Madam President filed personal bankruptcy in Los Angeles Bankruptcy Court to dodge any liability on these "guarantees."

The bank? A no-asset "by mail only" venture which was suspended from operating by the government of the Marshall Islands for failure to have adequate cash reserves.The bank officers who took our client's money? Settled out of court a big fraud suit we filed against them personally for pennies on the dollar.

The bank president? We have a federal court judgment against her personally for all of our client's deposit plus interest--now try to collect it.

The moral of the story? If someone is willing to pay you this kind of interest and promises you the moon, there has to be a gimmick.

Although your local banker won't pay you more than 8 or 9 percent interest on your insured savings, the chances of your getting all of your interest and principal out on demand, or on maturity as the case may be, are 100% in your favor.

With the European Overseas Bank Ltd. of the Marshall Islands, your chances of getting your money back are only as good as the president's personal guarantee. Backed up by no assets, no office equipment, no governmental supervision, and no insurance, what you might wind up with would be a handful of government bonds maturing ten years hence that can be sold today for 25 cents on the dollar. Our client, by the way, didn't realize she had to "request" these bonds, didn't do so, and had nothing to back her deposit up.

Folks, this is all public record and is not a fairy tale. It is a sad, sad case of someone losing their life savings to a couple of con artists. A call to our office and/or the local Better Business Bureau would have resulted in advice to steer clear of the venture.

Great, you say, but I've been hearing about businesses that can be set up and worked out of the house . . . very little capital outlay and huge returns for doing nothing.

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What about these indeed! We'll talk again!

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WORDS FROM HOME

by Lynda J. Foro

My kind of town, Chicago is . . . I think. I'm keeping an open mind. Recently I visited the Windy City after a 30-year absence. Now I'm eager to go back, with less delay than before.

Tell me, Chicago: Would I feel the same excitement in all areas of town, in communities without boundaries? My spirits were charged with an urban energy, long missing and welcomed at last.

My hostess for this visit was not a "member." Logistics kept me from exploring my true interest in Chicago. My stated wish was to visit Hunter's, 'til then my only identifiable landmark. This did not happen, despite my readiness in carrying a cue stick in my luggage.

Now I've added the Unabridged Bookstore to my list of must-sees. Wouldn't you know Armistead Maupin would be there signing his latest delight within days after my departure?

It's been some time since I've been limited to the company of a non-gay individual. Conversation, dulled by the years between visits and changes of lifestyle, became more superficial after my hostess opined that sex was for procreation. When's the last time you heard that one? And how long did you stay after hearing it?

Try to tell this person about endearing friends, and PLWAs, and losses of loved ones far closer than family. See what she grasps of testimony from the heart, about spiritual closeness, and non-romantic love between men and women. Tell her about the laughs and tears and quiet talks that move mountains.

Chicago stirred memories and whetted my appetite for more of that big city's life. My next trip will be in the proper company to appreciate "my kind of town."

I hope my friend will think about our talks and open her mind to alternative lifestyles. At least I tried to increase her awareness and understanding.

Chicago will be revisited. After I do, I'll call my friend from the airport and tell her what she missed.

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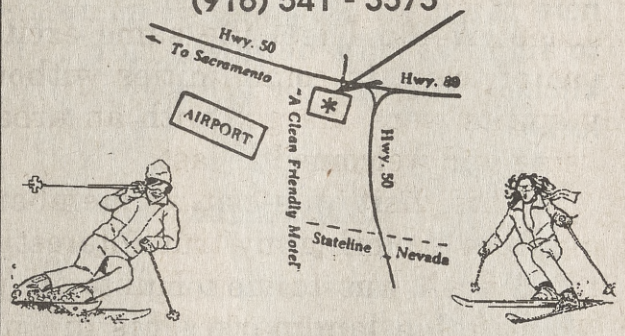

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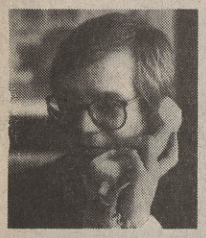

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BORN TO COOK

By Chef Luigi

Welcome to the Gay 90s! If the whirlwind of activities still has you spinning and darting about town like a gadfly, here is a quick soup recipes guaranteed to impress and help you out of the kitchen (and into the bedroom, if you're lucky).

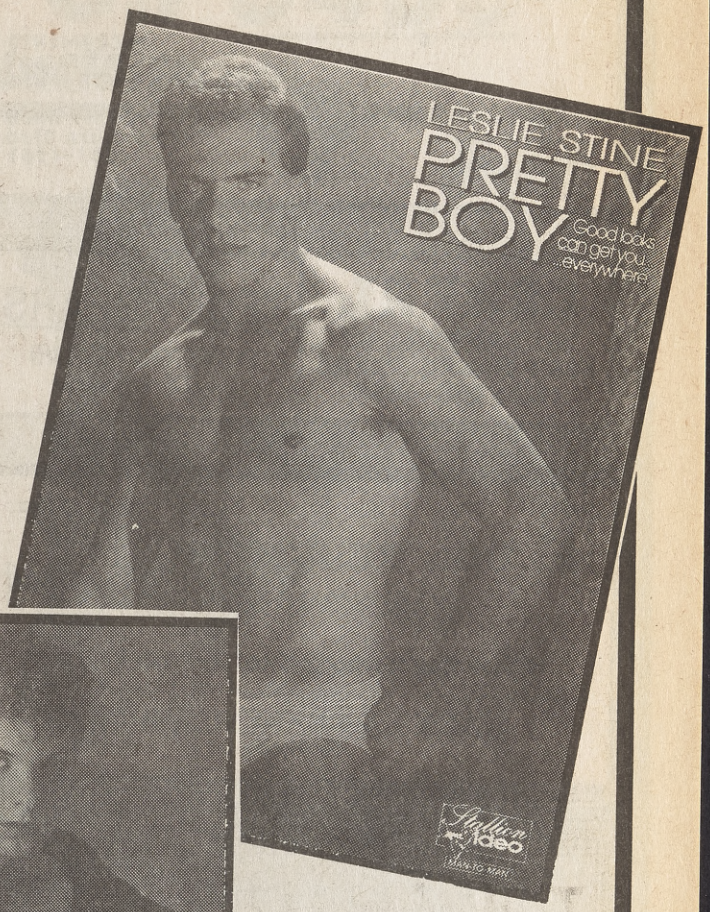
Crab Bisque

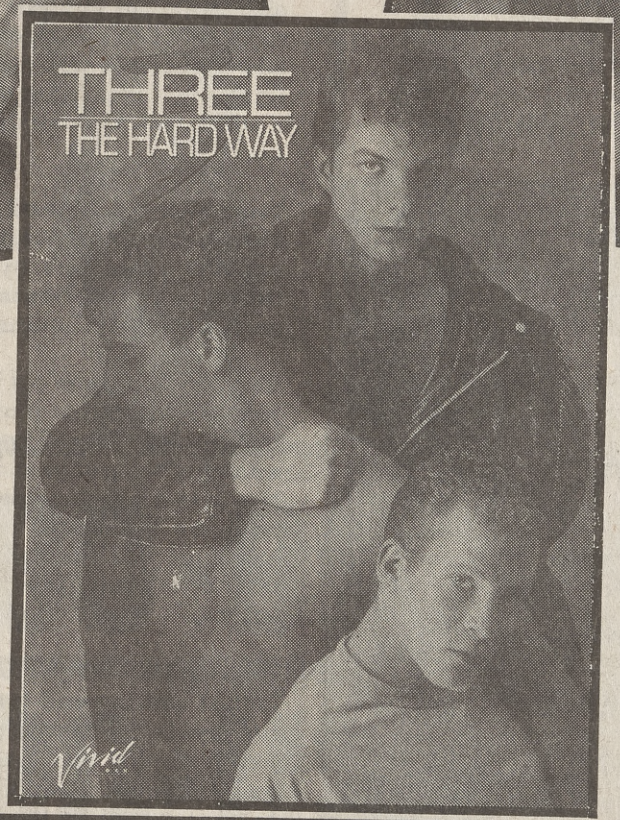
1 can tomato soup
1 can green pea soup
1 can consomme
2 soup cans of milk (see note)
12 oz frozen Alaskan crab meat, thawed and drained
salt and pepper to taste
Worcestershire sauce, just a few drops for hint of flavor as desired
3 tablespoons dry sherry

Before guests arrive, combine the tomato soup, green pea soup, consomme, milk, salt, pepper, and Worcestershire sauce in a pan and throw away the cans (no need to let everyone know how simple this really is). Twenty minutes before serving, simmer over low heat. After ten minutes, add the crab meat and continue simmering. Remove from heat and stir in the sherry. Serves 6.

NOTE: If you are as slim as I would like to be, you can substitute half and half for the milk. Or, on the other hand, if you are as chubby as I am, you can use 2%, but I don't really recommend it because there's such as thing as having your soup too thin. Also, fresh crab meat can be substituted when your budget allows and you are really wanting to impress that special someone. (Remember, get your crab from the market, not from your friends.)

Happy New Year





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by Guru Yhohrundi

[The psychic images presented here are the author's mental images of the answers to the questions asked by writers. Questions are answered as space permits. For a personal answer, mark you letter "personal" in the lefthand corner. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Write Guru Yhohrundi at the following address: Guru, Patlar, PO Box 22402, Sacramento, CA 95822. Or order Guru's book: ***Epigrams on Being*** for his observations on life's questions: relationships, money, sex, etc. $8 postpaid anywhere in US, cheques payable to Guru to above address.]

Dear Guru: Drugs are everywhere. I cannot make a suitable connection and get into a decent relationship because so many of the guys I meet are on drugs or selling drugs. I have seen what drugs can do, and will have none of it.--L.R., Chicago.

Dear L.R.: I have an impression of you meeting the right person between New Year's and Valentine's Day. Look deeper than his exterior, for I have impression of a short, dumpy guy who will consider you a hunk and complement to his appearance, and he will absolutely adore you. He is very naive, and will only take a social drink when urged. But unless you are really ready for a permanent relationship, don't start in and break his heart.

Dear Guru: Unless I get some encouragement elsewhere, I'm checking out of life. It gets worse and the years tick by and I continue to live in this well of loneliness. What's the point of it all, anyway?--R.S., Cincinnati.

Dear R.S.: You were put here for a reason, and one day you will know what your real purpose in life is. Don't kill yourself, or you'll be sorry, and you'll miss the real ecstacy of being alive and in love. I have the impression love is at hand. And I don't mean "just around the corner," or a "little later on" (whatever that means!); but love is in your life right now, and you haven't recognized it as yet. Take a look around and see your obvious love.

Dear Guru: Can you believe my lover went in the armed service and was killed in the "war?" We're not "really" in a war, but some of our troops are being shot at and are shooting. I call this war. I am still upset after four months and just unable to accept that he is really gone. Last week while taking a nap on the couch he came and sat beside me. It was about six o'clock in the evening and had grown dark without my realizing it, but I knew it was my lover and could feel him there. It all seemed very natural, so it must have been some kind of dream. He kissed me then, and it was as thrilling as it had been when he was alive and with me. He smiled and tenderly brushed his fingers over the stubble on my left cheek as he used to do, then disappeared. What's this all about?--L.R.S., New Orleans.

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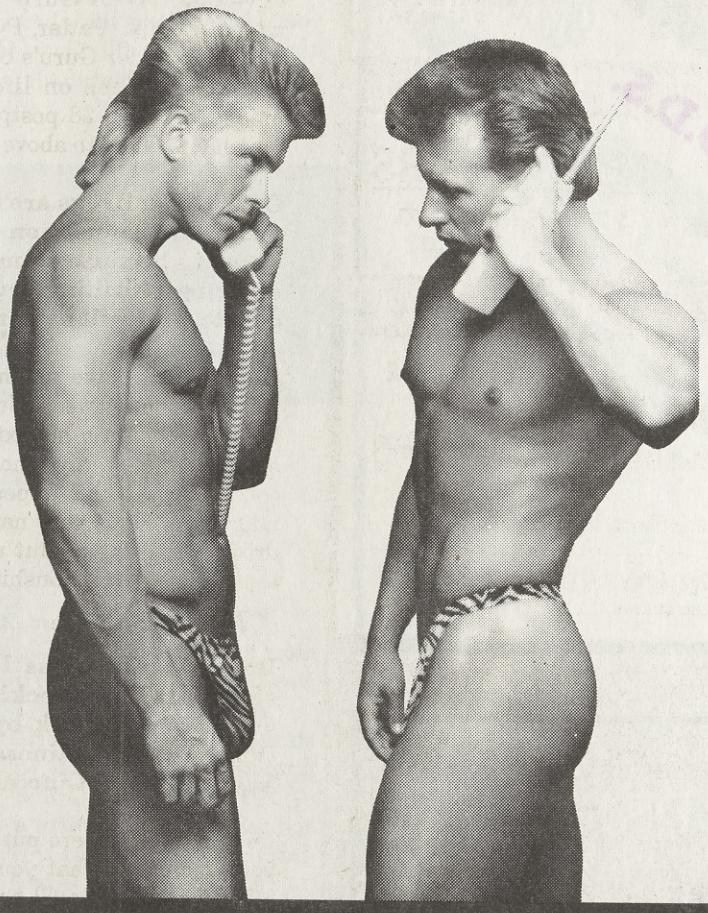

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Dear L.R.S.: It would be easy to say: "Don't be unhappy . . . try to forget . . . " and all that trite stuff. But I am aware how impossible it is not to think about an elephant--if you try not to think about an elephant. When you try not to think about something, that is precisely what you think about. So indulge yourself. Think about him. Think about this incident. Cherish it. Cherish every moment you had. And cherish every moment you still have in your body. I have the impression he just wants you to know he's OK, not in pain, and still loves you. I see a long life ahead for you, and you will find another soon to fill the void, although your late lover will always be cherished. [P.S. Seems like war to me, too.]

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HOROSCOPES

by Dr. Pat Larr

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 19): Shape-up time after your holiday pigout. A trim new you is the only way to start off the Gay Nineties.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20-Feb 18): A mysterious stranger has a big surprise for you. Not to worry. Your finances in the Nineties will be flush.

PISCES (Feb 19-Mar 20): A secret tip from a not-so-friendly friend averts a crisis. You may like a little drama in your life, but this is ridiculous.

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 19): A New Year's resolution pays off in a big way. Your wallet will feel a whole lot better for it.

TAURUS (Apr 20-May 20): You rang in the New Year with a new beau. Will it last? The stars say yes.

GEMINI (May 21-Jun 20): You're pulled in two directions this month (so what else is new?). But you'll gravitate to the one with the bigger basket (so what else is new?).

CANCER (Jun 21-Jul 22): You re-order your priorities for the New Year and this time it pays off. It's a whole new you to usher in the Nineties.

LEO (Jul 23-Aug 22): You started off the Gay Nineties with a bang. Are you the poster child for safe sex or what?

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sep 22): An unscrupulous friend longs to get closer and closer. Keep this pig at bay.

LIBRA (Sep 23-Oct 22): An old friend turns over a whole new leaf. You won't recognize him anymore. Too bad for him.

SCORPIO (Oct 23-Nov 22): A jealous ex comes swimming up out of the depths to confront you. Let this weasel sink back into the ocean from whence he came.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21): A country boy longs to see how big your twang is. He'll be plucking your heartstrings (and everything else) by month's end.

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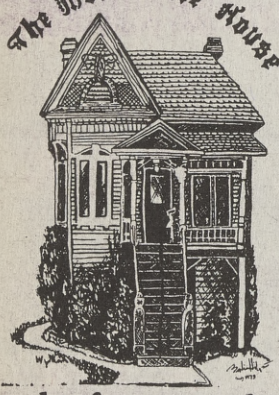

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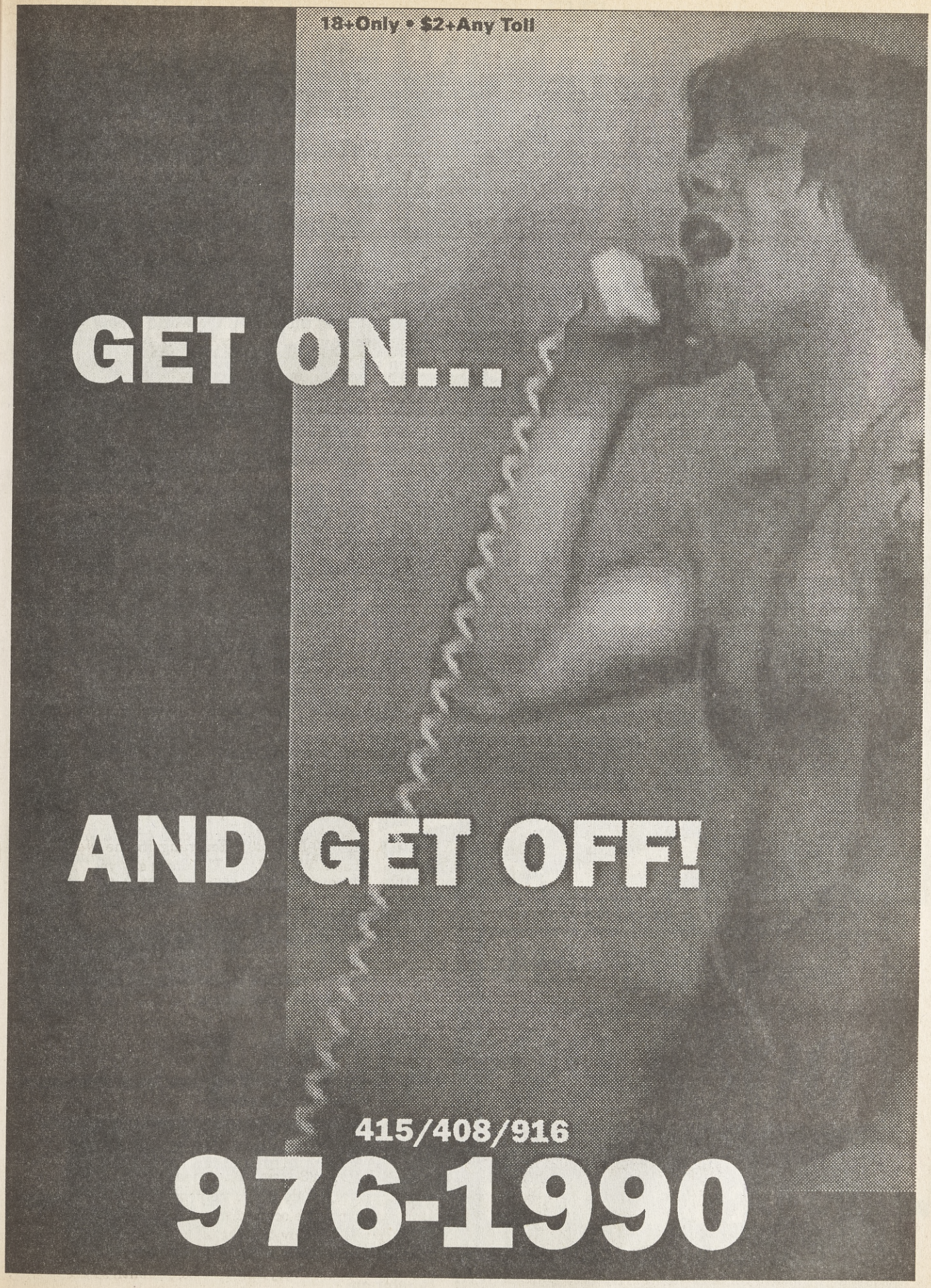

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POETRY CORNER

Inhabit Me

by Douglas N. Lewis

It's in the whispering of the moonlight
that I miss you the most.

Not that we have ever embraced the night,
completely alone, together,

But it's in that time when the world seems farthest away
When the wind blows through my thoughts
and across my skin
that you come so clearly to my swollen heart.

Inhabit me.
The you I know is the twilight you, the misty you,
the opaque you
when shadows reach (with your arms) to embrace me
The nighttime comfort of a billion stars from a billion years ago
all caressing the immediacy of my want for you
That's the only you I know, and yet you grow within me.

Inhabit me.

I wonder of your passions:
who, what, where, why WHEN;
and the thrust of your love, the rhythm of your love,
in the soft stroking of your gentle love lives the phantom eruption of my imagination.

And I ache,
Not painfully,
But like that moment when waking from a distant dream,
and all there is is the desire to slip back into it before it gets away.

Inhabit me.

Your voice is in my ear when your touch is far away
is the sweetest blue
(that mysterious mirror of my own soul's calling)
And it is enough to ground me.

I wait,
I can wait,
I can wait for you.

Inhabit me.

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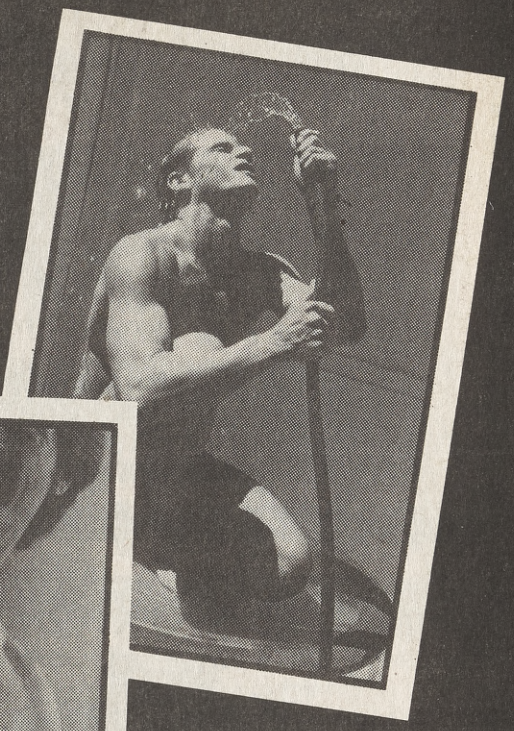

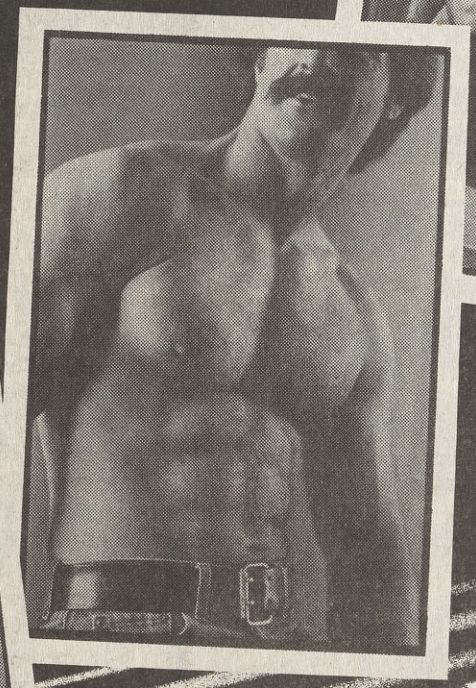

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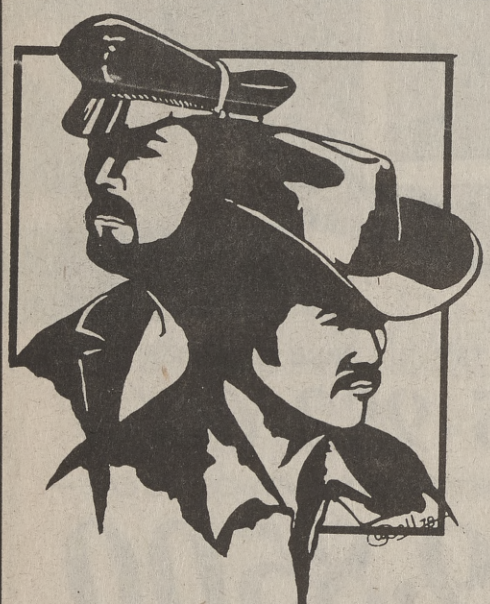

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CARRYINGS-ON IN GAY SACRAMENTO

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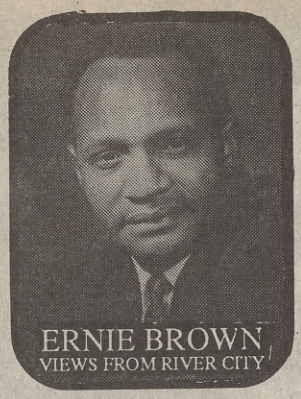

Welcome to a new decade!

December '89 did not go out like a lamb; to the contrary. There were a lot of fundraisers & fanfares during the month of December. One of the hilites was The Progressive Praise Productions Present: Holiday Cabaret, A Benefit Gala: Romanovsky & Phillips with Aldo Belle & Katibelle Collins. If you missed this event, you missed a treat . . . LaKish's (Merc) & Larry Ross's (Townhouse) campaign for "Toys for Tots" was highly successful. They collected over $1,400 worth of toys . . . The Townhouse's Christmas (formal) party was another beautiful fundraiser. They raised over $1,200. The entire amount was awarded to various charities: AIDS Foundation, Hand-to-Hand, Hope House, Make A Wish Foundation, and others . . . Mitch's Homecoming Party & Show at the Merc was highly successful. Over $700 were raised that night . . . Terry Sidee's (Faces, Sacto) formal Christmas Party was a great success, as usual. Having the Sacto Men's Chorus for entertainment was a nice touch . . . CGNIE Christmas Party was highly successful, too . . . Now for January. Coming up at Faces Too in Stockton, "Leather-2" Fri. Jan 12 hosted by Emperor 15 Mark & Empress 15 Rita Rosa Rita. Show at 10 PM, prizes for best dressed leather male & female, 50/50 raffle, $2 donation. Money to be donated to Stockton Metro Food Bank . . . Keep your eyes & ears open and listen to the Buffalo Club. Coming up soon: liquor, food, the whole works; it's in the making as of this moment. In the meantime, enjoy theirdancing on the weekends. Buffalo Stampede every Sat from 7 PM til 10 PM--all the beer you can drink for $5 . . . Speaking of dancing, the Townhouse is planning to start their dancing upstairs very soon . . . Lady Diana is planning a big show to be held at Joseph's some time in Jan. Wait for announcement . . . Every third Wed, Bingo at the Merc . . . Partners liquor license is still in the works. In the meanwhile, go over to Partners and have a bite to eat; you'll be well pleased . . . Here is something that we shall should be concerned about. Community muggings. The last week in 1989 there were three muggings in our community. All gay men and lesbian assaults. I have a few "Ernie Brown Safety Tips" (common sense) for the streets, bars & parks. 1. Be Cautious of people you meet. 2. Know your limits with alcohol; don't let it impede your judgment. 3. Avoid rough trade. 4. Travel only down well-lit streets and with someone else when possible. 5. Don't go home with strangers. 6. Don't be afraid to warn someone if they are talking to someone you know to be dangerous. 7. If you think someone is following you, don't hesitate to call the police, 911, or ask passers-by for help. 8. Let friends at the bar know whom you are leaving with. 9. Always have your wits about you at all time. Be aware who is around you, stay away from corners & hedges, especially when walking streets or in a parking lot.

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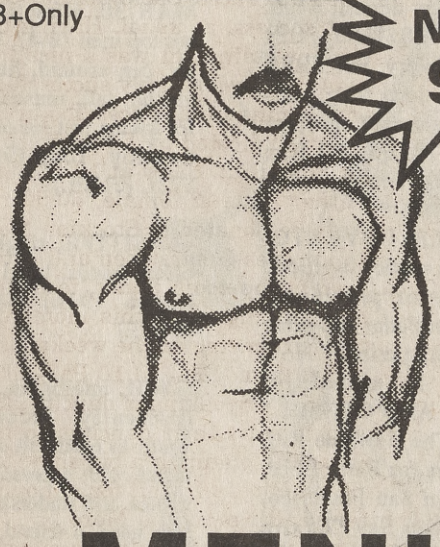

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WANTED: Volunteers and underwriters for Visionz, Sacramento's Gay & Lesbian TV Magazine. Visionz 21128 El Camino, Box 113, Sacramento, CA 95821. Phone (916) 641-0704.

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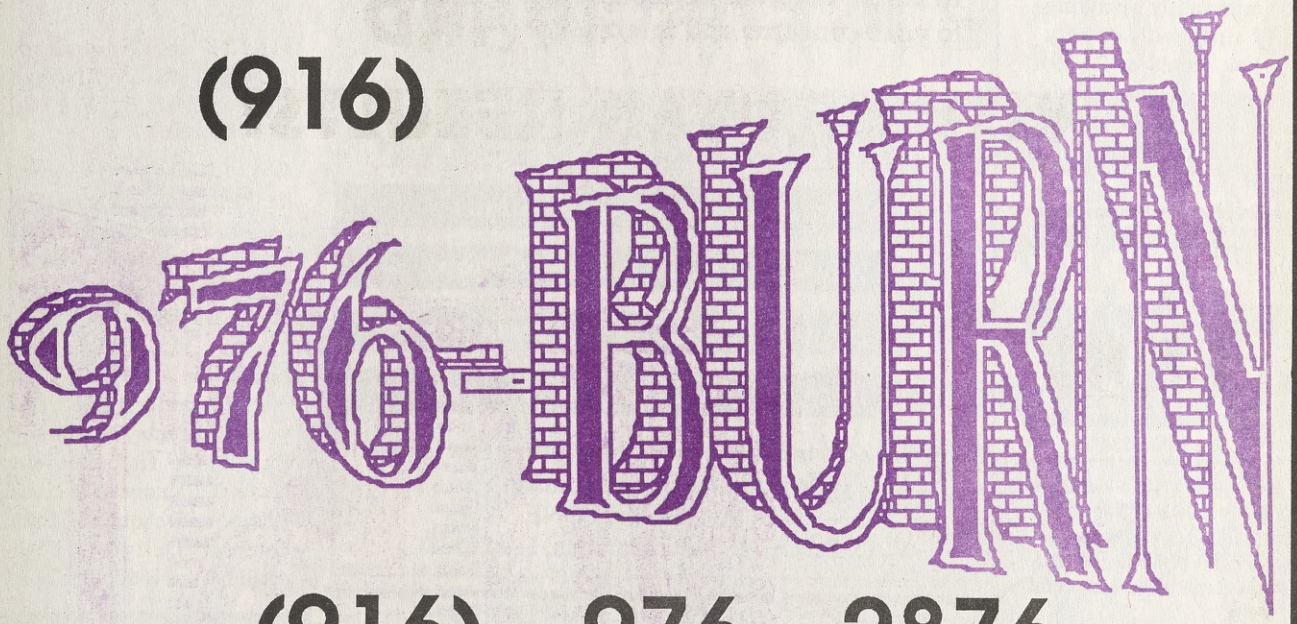

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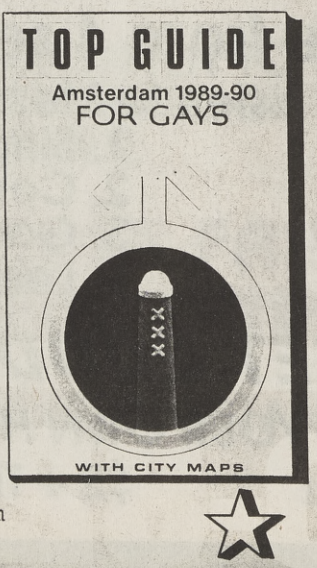

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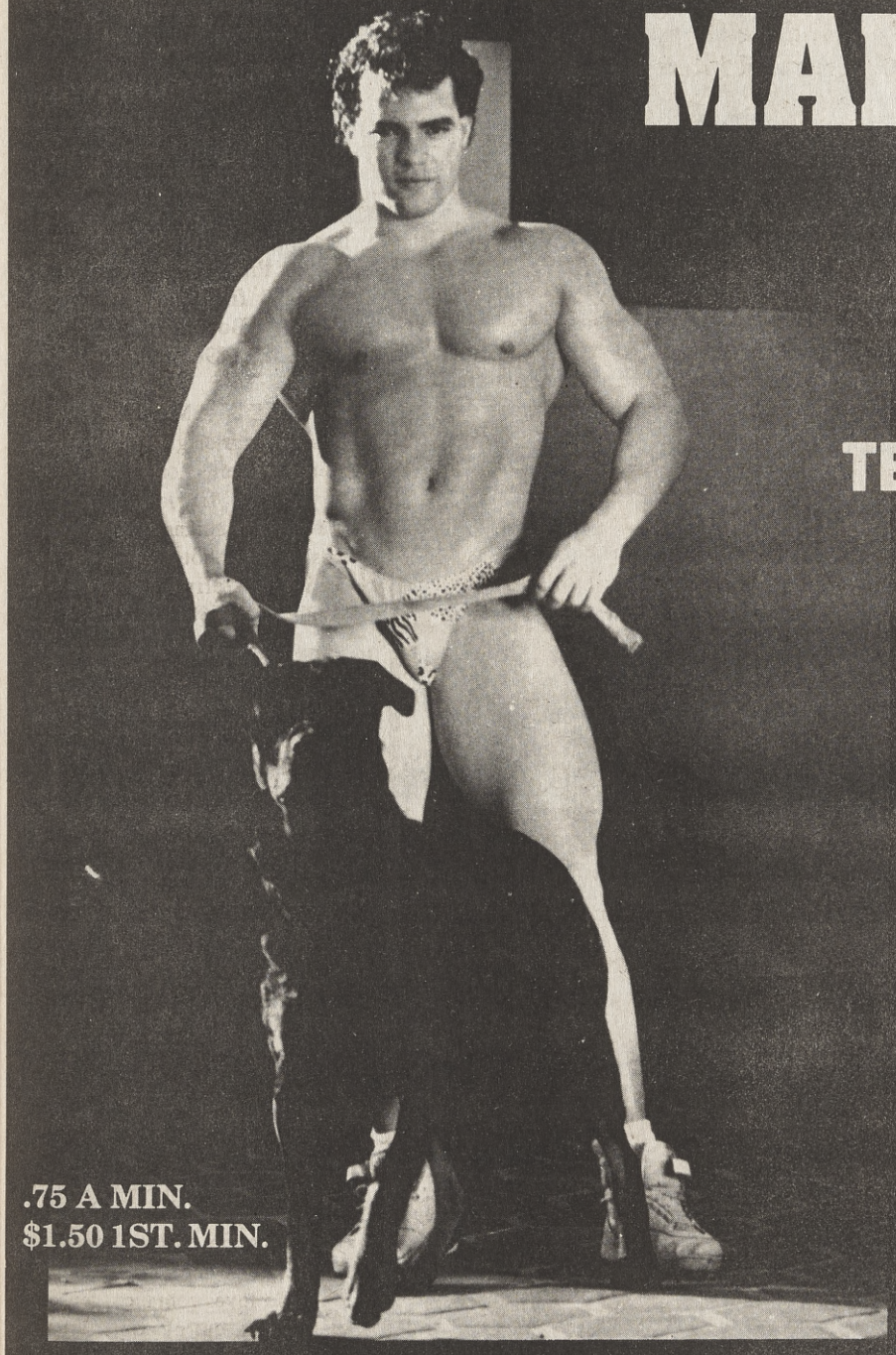

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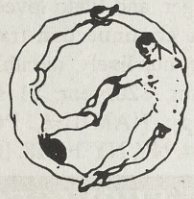

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